

**Slide 1 of 21**

Title Slide: Data Collected Through SASS

**Slide 2 of 21**

SASS collects data on a wide variety of topics from schools and staff. This module provides more detailed information about some of the topics and components of SASS that were described in the introductory module. This module is intended to help users determine whether SASS data fit their research purposes.

There are several different types of questionnaire items used in SASS. Each has its own purpose and they will be described in this module.

There are many individual topics covered in each SASS data collection. This module will serve as a guide through each section to help the user find particular topics of interest more easily. It is advisable to download and read each of the SASS questionnaires of potential interest.

**Slide 3 of 21**

The Schools and Staffing Survey, or SASS, collects extensive data on American public and private elementary and secondary schools. Teachers, principals, schools, school districts, and library media centers are components of the SASS system. SASS provides data on characteristics and qualifications of teachers and principals, teacher hiring practices, professional development, class size, and other conditions in schools. For 20 years, SASS has been the most prevalent source of comparable nationwide data on schools and their staff. The Teacher Follow-up Survey, or TFS, determines how many teachers remained at the same school, moved schools, or left teaching the year after the SASS administration. The Principal Follow-up Survey, or PFS, determines how many principals remained at the same school, moved schools, or left the principalship the year after the SASS administration.

**Slide 4 of 21**

SASS is a survey centered on gathering data from elementary and secondary schools as institutions, generally grade levels K through 12 or 1 through 12. Some data about elementary and secondary students are collected, but data on individual students or data with identifying characteristics about students and parents are not within the scope of this survey system. There are no data collected on individual students nor is identifying information about students or parents collected. Additionally, homeschooling is not covered by SASS aside from policies of school districts or private schools related to support of homeschooling. Further, schools that have preschool students are only in SASS if the school has students at the kindergarten and first grade level.

**Slide 5 of 21**

The school is the centerpiece of SASS, however the school's teachers and principal are important elements of the education workforce, too. The district sets policies for public schools, and school libraries support student learning so their data are also very informative.

It is important to collect descriptive information about schools, districts, principals, teachers, and school library media centers. In addition to this, however, it is also important to gather data from teachers and principals in terms of their attitudes about their workplace to help researchers gauge the school learning and working environment. Teachers' and principals' attitudes toward conditions in schools are one gauge of job satisfaction, while the actual behavior as measured in TFS and PFS is another gauge.

**Slide 6 of 21**

SASS initially adapted some of its content from previous surveys on occupational mobility and job satisfaction of nurses and supply and demand for teachers. Over time, a variety of subject-matter experts were consulted to help draft or review new items. Even factual items, such as counts of students, were field-tested prior to first use to test whether response categories were completely understood.

Opinion items, those where respondents rate a statement on a scale of "Agree" to "Disagree," were developed with careful wording to avoid bias. Opinion items were also field tested prior to first use.

Survey items on new topic areas in more recent data collections were developed by conducting in-depth focus groups with people who matched the target population. Focus groups often helped to craft item wording more precisely.

The SASS team evaluated each questionnaire between data collections to improve the content and flow.

**Slide 7 of 21**

From its inception, SASS has been guided by subject-matter experts in areas as diverse as teacher supply and demand, teacher retirement policy, principal leadership, and library resource management. Nationally-known researchers were asked to provide input on conceptual issues for SASS. Experts were also occasionally asked to review draft versions of potential items for input on measurement issues. The SASS Team and managers at NCES took such guidance into advisement but ultimately had the final say over content. Officials at the Office of Management and Budget (or OMB), which regulates all federal surveys, also provided input by suggesting content or at times by assisting with crafting appropriate items.

Expert groups were formed to guide the general redesign effort for 2007-08 SASS, and to review changes to content for 2011-12 SASS. Several different types of experts have

## **Data Collected Through SASS**

helped in the development and/or revision of SASS. For example, nationally-known labor economists and education researchers who study principals, public charter schools, teacher professional development, teacher career trajectories, teacher supply and demand, and a school library subgroup from the American Library Association have been consulted for SASS question designs.

Many NCES surveys also contain assessments or other forms of psychometric measurement. SASS does not have such measures, so it relies less on experts than studies employing psychometric instruments. SASS items are not reviewed for inter-item consistency; however factor analysis has been used to eliminate some attitude items. Opinion items may be combined into factor analytic scales by researchers as they deem it appropriate.

### **Slide 8 of 21**

This module provides details about the topics covered in each 2011-12 SASS questionnaire including the Principal and Private School questionnaires, the School, Private School, and Public Charter School with District Items questionnaires, the District questionnaire, Teacher and Private School Teacher questionnaire, and the School Library Media Center questionnaire. It provides the naming conventions, or short-hand reference, that data users should be aware of when using SASS data for their analytic purposes.

The order of numbering SASS questionnaires starts with 1 for District, 2 for Principal, 3 for School, 4 for Teacher, but LS is used for public school Library Media Center. The letters following these numbers were assigned for field data collection and data processing purposes to denote each version: “A” is for public sector questionnaires, “B” is for private sector questionnaires, and “Y” is used to denote the public sector questionnaires that have both school and district items. For example, SASS questionnaire 4A is the questionnaire for teachers – which we know from the four, in the public sector – or, A.

At the school level, a packet of questionnaires is sent to the person designated by the principal as a school coordinator. This packet contains all of the questionnaires except the Teacher Questionnaire which is sent later after teachers are sampled from the Teacher Listing Form. The school coordinator delivers the questionnaires to the principal and library media center respondent, and assists with the Teacher Listing Form. Later on, the school coordinator delivers the Teacher questionnaires to the sampled teachers, and then collects sealed envelopes to be sent back (although respondents may send their questionnaires back individually) to the Census Bureau.

The SASS questionnaires can be accessed by clicking on the underlined screen text, ‘questionnaires.’

### **Slide 9 of 21**

Separate questionnaires are needed for public school principals and private school principals because public and private schools have different ways of operating and

## **Data Collected Through SASS**

sometimes use different terminology. For example, the person who directs a private school is often called a “head” (formerly “headmaster”) or “director” rather than “principal.” The term “head” is used as an equivalent to “principal” throughout the questionnaire and private school heads or principals are asked whether their position is unpaid. In private schools, the term “Individual Education Plan” or IEP is not used for handling students with special needs, so items about students with IEPs are modified in both the 2B and 3B questionnaires. Aside from topics that don’t apply to private schools or the addition of response categories that apply only to private schools, the 2A and 2B questionnaires are designed to collect comparable data.

The data collected from the principal questionnaires describe the length of principals’ experience and type of training. Items on the questionnaires reflect the principal’s most recent previous position held prior to becoming the principal and any aspiring-principal training. Aspiring-principal training is offered to those not holding any type of supervisory position, most often to teachers.

### **Slide 10 of 21**

The education and professional development items ask about the principal’s academic training and highest-degree earned.

The goals and decision-making items are geared to reflect the principal’s priorities and who influences decisions about various types of school policies and practices.

The Teacher and Aide Professional Development questions focus on the types of administrative support available for teacher and teacher aide professional development at the principal’s school.

### **Slide 11 of 21**

The School Climate and Safety section of the Principal questionnaire asks about various types of safety measures employed by schools and about perceptions of safety or crime at the school.

Items geared toward tapping into information about instructional time for students ask for the amount of total teaching time spent weekly by teachers of third or eighth grade students in selected subject-matter areas, such as reading and mathematics.

Principals’ perceptions about the proportion of time spent on various administrative and instructional tasks, as well as their salary earned, are assessed with the Working Conditions questions. Private school heads are asked if their salary is contributed, which applies to religious workers who do not accept a salary.

Basic descriptive data about principals or school heads is also asked, so that aggregate data can be reported by gender, race/ethnicity, and age group.

**Slide 12 of 21**

Three different school questionnaires were needed because traditional public schools are those operated by a regular school district, while public charter schools may or may not be operated or under the authority of a regular school district – so traditional public schools receive the School questionnaire. For this questionnaire, the three represents the School component, and “A” represents the public sector. Similarly, “B” is used for the private sector version, and “Y” is used for the combined school and district version that is sent to public charter schools or traditional public schools that are the only school in a district.

This difference means that public charter schools not under the authority of a regular school district have to be asked those district-level items, such as teacher compensation (these schools receive the School Questionnaire with District Items or 3Y questionnaire). Private schools also have to be asked district-level items, when they apply to private schools. Some district policy items simply aren’t applicable to private schools. Private schools receive the Private School or 3B questionnaire.

There is a great deal of overlap between the three questionnaires. That overlap, as well as the differences between questionnaires, will be addressed in the slides that follow.

**Slide 13 of 21**

In the general information section, questions are asked about the school and its students, such as the total number of students and length and start time of the school day.

The questions in the admissions and programs section address items such as admissions policies and various types of academic programs for students such as Advanced Placement (or AP) and International Baccalaureate (or IB). It is also within this section on the private school district questionnaire that items regarding tuition are asked.

Within the student and class organization section of the questionnaires questions are asked about school policies regarding looping, or groups of students that remain two or more years with the same teacher, and whether block scheduling or year-round scheduling is used by the school or not.

**Slide 14 of 21**

The graduation and service requirements section collects data on district-level high school graduation requirements and whether students are required to have hours of public service to graduate. Public charter and private schools are asked about those requirements as they apply to the schools’ students, if applicable. The graduation requirements section of the SASS school questionnaire is only asked of private schools (in SASS 3B) and public charter schools not under a school district (in SASS 3Y). This section of items appears on the district questionnaire for traditional public schools, as the school district is the more appropriate respondent to provide such information.

## **Data Collected Through SASS**

The Staffing section asks for headcounts of all types of school employees by position type and whether the position is full-time or part-time. Another district-level topic, the Recruitment and Hiring of Staff, asks about policies and practices for hiring and recruiting teachers and principals. Comparable data for traditional public school hiring and recruitment policies and practices are collected on the District, or 1A, questionnaire.

### **Slide 15 of 21**

The Special Programs and Services section asks about academic programs for students with disabilities, English-language learners, counts of students who receive free or reduced-price lunches, and students taught by Title I teachers. The items on Principal or Head and Teacher Compensation include the amount of principal or school head and teacher salaries at various levels and whether various fringe benefits are offered to teachers.

Public charter schools not under the authority of a regular school district may offer their own teacher and principal contracts, these types of data are collected in the teacher and principal contracts section of SASS 3Y.

The charter school information section seeks basic information about the way charter schools are authorized and whether charter schools support homeschooling.

### **Slide 16 of 21**

School districts now include not only the traditional regular school district but also some districts that oversee a combination of traditional public and public charter schools. Public school districts may operate only traditional public schools or both traditional public and public charter schools. A school district is an entity outside of the school that has the responsibility for managing schools – this may not always mean operating them, but hiring school staff, providing school facilities, and funding schools.

The district or 1A questionnaire is sent out to a designated administrative official for the school district. The school superintendent may designate anyone within that office, someone in the Office of Research, or someone in Human Resources, to complete the questionnaire.

The general information about the district section of the questionnaire gathers basic enrollment information, grade levels, and other information from the district. The Recruitment and Hiring of Staff items focus on district policies for recruitment practices and hiring policies. They also gather information from the previous year on teacher dismissals due to poor performance.

### **Slide 17 of 21**

The Principal and Teacher Compensation items collect the amount of principal and teacher salaries at various levels and whether various fringe benefits are offered to teachers. The Student Assignment section asks about parental choice with school assignment either within or across districts. Graduation Requirement data are collected

## **Data Collected Through SASS**

as they relate to high-school graduation and service requirements. Items covering Migrant Education include the number of migrant education students in the district. In the district performance section, data are collected about whether the district has to meet certain performance requirements.

### **Slide 18 of 21**

Within the Teacher and Private School Teacher questionnaires, the General Information section asks about the type of position held in the school and about the number of years of teaching experience, including full or part-time employment. The Classroom Organization section covers how students are grouped within classes. The items in the Education and Training section explore the academic training of teachers prior to entering teaching. The section on Certification collects information on current teaching certifications held.

### **Slide 19 of 21**

The Professional Development section asks about training during the teacher's tenure. The Working Conditions section covers the teacher's weekly working hours and teaching workload to assess the amount of time spent in the classroom. The School Climate and Teacher Attitude section covers opinion and attitude questions about conditions within the school. The General Employment and Background section collects data on salaries and compensation from all sources and teacher tenure. For the Teacher Follow-up Survey, contact information is requested on a voluntary basis in case the teacher is selected for potential follow-up the next school year.

### **Slide 20 of 21**

A school librarian or other knowledgeable school respondent completes the Library Media Center questionnaire. Traditional public schools and public charter schools receive a packet of questionnaires that include the Library Media Center or LS1 questionnaire. The school coordinator or school respondent distributes the LS1 questionnaire to someone, usually the school librarian, who is knowledgeable about the school's library media center. Private schools do not receive the LS1.

The Facilities, Services, and Policies section of the questionnaire asks about the types of facilities and services available to students and faculty, as well as policies governing the library media center. Staffing items cover the types of library media center staff and counts of full or part-time positions. The Technical and Information Literacy questions are concerned with assessing whether there are policies about technical and information literacy. Last School Year's Collections and Expenditures items collect data on the amount of holdings and what was spent last year.

### **Slide 21 of 21**

This module has provided you with more detailed information about the content of each Schools and Staffing Survey questionnaire. Specifically, this module focused on describing the underlying principles guiding SASS and how the questionnaire items

## **Data Collected Through SASS**

were developed. This module also explained the topics of questionnaire items as well as variations within the questionnaires included in SASS. Additionally, important resources that have been provided throughout the module are summarized here along with the module's objectives for your reference.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series or exit the module.